

The Tragedy of Hamlet

heare me old friend, can you play the murther of Gonzago?

Play, I my Lord.

Ham. Weele haue to morrow night, you could for need study
a speech of some dozen lines, or sixteene lines, which I would set
downe and insert in't: could you not?

Play. I my Lord.

Ham. Very well, follow that Lord, and looke you mocke him
not. My good friends, Ile leavie you till night, you are welcome
to Elsonoure. Exeant Pol. and Players,

Ros. Good my Lord.

Ham. I so, God buy to you, now I am alone,
O what a rogue and pesant slauie an I!
Is it not monstrous that this player heere
But in a fixion, in a dreame of passion
Could force his soule so to his owne conceit
That from her working all the visage wand,
Teares in his eyes, distraction in his aspect,
A broken voyce, and his whole function fusing
With formes to his conceit; and all for nothing,
For Hecuba.

What's Hecuba to him, or he to her,
That he should weepe for her? what would he doe
Had he the motiue, and that for passion
That I haue? he would drowne the stage with teares,
And cleave the generall eare with horrid speech,
Make mad the guilty, and appeale the free,
Confound the ignorant, and amaze indeed,
The very faculties of eyes and eares; yet I,
A dull and muddy mettled raskall peake,
Like Iohn-a-dreames, vnpregnant of my cause,
And can say nothing; no not for a King,
Vpon whose property and most deare life,
A damn'd defeate was made: am I a coward,
Who calls me villaine, breakes my pate a crosse,
Pluckes off my beard, and blowes it in my face,
Tweakes me by the nose, giues me the lie i' th throat
As deepe as to the lungenes: who does me this,
Hah! s' wounds I should take it: for it cannot be
But I am pidgion liuerd, and lacke gall

To

Prince of Denmarke.

To make oppression bitter, or ere this
I should haue fated all the region kytes
With this slauies offall, bloody, baudy villaine,
Remorselesse, treacherous, lecherous, kindlesse villaine.
Why what an Asse am I? this is most braue,
That I the sonne of a deere father murthered,
Prompted to my reuenge by heauen and hell,
Must like a whore vnpack my heart with words,
And fall a cursing like a very drabbe; a stallion, fie vppont, soh.
About my braines, hum, I haue heard,
That guilty creatures sitting at a play,
Haue by the very cunning of the scene,
Beene strooke so to the soule, that presently
They haue proclaim'd their malefactions:
Formurther though it haue no tongue will speake
With most miraculous organ. Ile haue these Players
Play somthing like the murther of my father
Before mine Uncle, Ile obserue his looks,
Ile tent him to the quicke, if a do blench
I know my course. The spirit that I haue seen
May be a diuell, and the diuell hath power
To assume a pleasing shape; yea and perhaps,
Out of my weakeresse and my melancholly,
As hee is very potent with such spirits,
Abuses mee to damne mee; Ile haue grounds
More relatiue then this, the play's the thing
Wherein Ile catch the conscience of the King. Exit.

Enter King, Queene, Polonius, Ophelia, Rosencraus, Guyl-
densterne, Lords

King. And can you by no drift of conference
Get from him why hee puts on this confusion,
Grating so harshly all his dayes of quiet
With turbulent and dangerous lunacie?

Ros. He dooes confess he seeles himselfe distracted,
But from what cause a will by no meanes speake.

Guyl. Nor do wee find him forward to be sounded,
But with a crafty madnes keepes aloofe
When yee would bring him on to some confession

G.

